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BRIEF MEMORANDA ON THE LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND MEMBERSHIP OF CERTAIN FRENCH PARTIES AND POLITICAL FORMATIONS

(Prepared for the Office of War Information, Bureau of Research and Analysis)

Request No. 133

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REF

I. PARTI POPULAIRE FRANCAIS (PPF)

A. Origin

Founded in 1936.

Sprang into the forefront in June 1941, when war between Germany and Russia broke out.

Co-founder of the Comité d'Action pour la legion des volontaires français contre le bolchevisme (Legion of French Volunteers against Bolshevism), turned later by Pierre Laval into the Légion Tricolore (Tricolor Legion).

B. Leaders

National Committee (Comité National)

President-Founder: Jacques Doriot
Vice-President: Yves Sicard
Treasurer: Pierre Dutilleul
Secretary: Victor Barthelemy

Political Office (Bureau Politique)

Secretary-General: Victor Barthelemy
Administrative Secretary-General: Fernand Canobbio
Party Secretary (President of the Empire Office): Jean Fossati
Party Delegate Paris Zone: Alain Janvier
Party Delegate Vichy Zone: Fernand Canobbio

Delegate for Corporations: Albert Beugras
Delegate for Foreign Policies: Simon Sabiani
Treasurer for the Paris Zone: Emile Masson
Treasurer for the Vichy Zone: Maurice Le Brun
Administrator of Emancipation Nationale: Maurice Le Brun
Chief Editor Emancipation Nationale: Yves Sicard
Administrator of Cri du Peuple: Georges Rey
Manager of Cri du Peuple: Henri Lebre
Press Representative, Paris Zone: Henri Lebre
Press Representative, Vichy Zone: Yves Sicard
Secretary, Agricultural Office: Henri Maunier
General Secretary UPJF (Popular Union of French Youth): Maurice de Gorjux
Administrative Secretary UPJF: Delubeau
President of the Moslem College: Djelali

C. Organization

The PPF is organized in regions; each region includes federations corresponding to the administrative departments, federations include sectors (administrative arrondissements), and each sector includes sections (administrative cantons).

However, in view of the paucity of members, in some regions only the framework exists.

1. Regions

There are eleven regions in the Paris Zone: Paris, Rennes, Caen, Angers, Poitiers, Bordeaux, Orléans, Lille, Reims, Troyes, and Dijon.

There are five regions in the Vichy Zone: Nice, Marseille, Lyon, Montpellier, and Toulouse.

Each region is under a regional Inspector who receives directives from the Political Office.

2. Federations

The only available information refers to the Paris Zone, which is said to include 48 departmental federations apart from the Federation Parisienne which includes 160 sections under the direction of Leblay.

Every federation is presided over by a federal bureau which passes on instructions from party headquarters to the departmental committee which in turn is responsible for transmitting them to the sections.

3. Sections

There exist two kinds of sections: the section locale, a local center for party members; the section d'entreprise, for education of and propaganda among the workers.

D. Subsidiary organizations

Attached to the PPF are several subsidiary organizations including: Jeunesses Populaires Françaises(JPF) or French popular youth; Service d'Ordre (SO) or Service of Order; Groupe Musulman Nord-Africain; Cercles populaires francais (CPF); and Amis de l'Emancipation Nationale. As long as France was divided into an occupied and an unoccupied zone, the two latter organizations provided a useful cover to the activities of the party in the unoccupied zone in view of the ban on political parties decreed by Vichy right after the Armistice.

1. Jeunesses Populaires Françaises (JPF)

On 24 May 1943, the former Union Populaire de la Jeunesse française and all connected movements were merged into the Jeunesses Populaires Françaises.

a. Leaders

Nominal leader: Jacques Doriot
Acting chairman: Vauquelin
General Secretary for Propaganda: Joannès Tête
General Secretary to Organization: de Gorjux
Directoire: Vellave, Mallezet, Rougere, Albertini, Varin, d'Aubagnat, Moreteau, Baglin, Grasse, Rossigneux, Barriere.

b. Organization

JPF organization is parallel to that of the PPF, with departmental federations, sections, equipes, and correspondants.

Each federation is directed by a federal secretary assisted by a bureau composed as follows:

a federal secretary
an administrative secretary
a chef federal du groupe d'action
a delegate for sports and leisure
a delegate for arts and culture
a delegate for propaganda
a delegate for students and high school pupils
a corporative secretary (relations with industrial workers)

a secretary for farm youth
a secretary for Jeunes Filles françaises

Each federation is composed of the following sections:

Section JPF (young men)
Section JFF (young girls)
Section JPAF (young farmers)
Section Pionniers, Loups, Lionceaux (children)

2. Service d'Ordre (SO)

Little is known as the SO which must not be confused with the former SOL of the Legion of Combattants.

Its members are grouped in divisions, phalanxes, and platoons. Each platoon probably includes ten men. In the Paris Zone, SO members are believed to number several thousand, and they have barracks in Paris.

SO members are in fact the shock troops of the party. They must take the following oath:

"In the name of the people and the fatherland, I swear loyalty and devotion to the PPF, its ideals and its leader. I swear that I will work with all my might against communism and social individualism. I swear that I will give my life for the cause of the National People's Revolution, from which a new, free and independent France will emerge."

3. Groupe musulman nord-africain

The activities of this group centered round the College Musulman in Paris, under Djelali Bentami, formerly in contact with headquarters in Algiers, under a certain Larabi Podil, Arab delegate.

4. Cercles Populaires Français (CPF)

The CPF was founded in 1939 to establish a kind of liaison "between politics and culture, between thought and action."

President: Abel Bonnard, now Minister-Secretary of State for National Education.

Secretary: Ramon Fernandez, a well-known French novelist, one of the contributors of the Nouvelle Revue Francaise who turned Fascist in the late nineteen-thirties.

CPF members are particularly active in the Marseille area, under the influence of Simon Sabiani and Horace de Carbuccia, editor of Gringoire and PPF sympathizer.

5. Amis de l'Emancipation Nationale

This body served for some time as a useful cover for the activities of the party. It exists primarily in the Vichy Zone.

E. Party publications and editors

Paris: daily Le Cri du Peuple (H. Lebre)
Marseille: weekly Emancipation Nationale (M. Sicard)
Marseille: Weekly Midi Libre (S. Sabiani)
Bordeaux: l'Assaut (P. Thurotte)

F. Membership

No really reliable data on the party's membership are as yet obtainable.

Vichy "Transocean" (5 July 1943), quoting one Georges Schroeder's interview, stated that "the membership of Doriot's very active party is between 50,000 and 100,000."

The PPF November 1942 Congress was said to have been attended by 7,200 delegates (Rome radio 11 November 1942), by 7,000 delegates (Transocean, 4 November 1942) and by 6,000 delegates (the same source and date). But there is no real indication that these figures are true, and the ratio between the number of delegates and total membership is unknown.

The JPF itself claims a membership of 10,000, but it is impossible to assess the veracity of this figure.

II. FRANCISTES

A. Origin

Founded in 1933. Dissolved with the other Fascist Leagues in June 1936.

Reappeared early in 1941.

Co-founder of Comité d'Action pour la Légion des Volontaires français contre le bolchevisme.

Reported to have merged with the RNP (Rassemblement National Populaire), or rather the FRN (Front Revolutionnaire National) on 6 November 1942, in recent weeks it has reappeared independently.

B. Leaders

Chairman: Marcel Bucard
General Commissioner for political action: Paul Guiraud
General Commissioner for social action: Godefroy Dupont
General Commissioner for revolutionary action: Andre Cacheux
General Commissioner for financial organization: Blanchard
General Commissioner for youth: Claude Planson

C. Organization

The North Zone includes at least seven and possibly ten regions:

Normandie
Bretagne
Bourgogne
Aquitaine
Mayenne
Touraine
Ile de France

to which probably may be added:

Lorraine
Picardie
Champagne

There is one delegate for each of the regions of the North Zone. For the South Zone there is only one general delegate.

The regions are subdivided, each subdivision being entrusted to a delegate, at the head of a Center for the diffusion of Francisme, in charge of party propaganda.

These centers, when they include a sufficient membership, may set-up the Comités Revolutionnaires francistes.

D. Subsidiary organizations

1. Corps Francs

The Corps Francs are the storm troopers of the party, under a certain Commandant Ramelot.

2. Jeunesse Franciste

The Jeunesse Franciste is the organization of the younger members of the movement, including the girls' formation, Jeunesse feminine franciste, with allegedly one Ecole de Cadres (Training School) in each zone.

3. Cadets Francistes

For boys between the ages of eight and ten there is the Cadets Francistes, under a certain Poimiroo.

E. Publications

Paris weekly: The Franciste, with two editions, one in Paris and one in Aix-en-Provence. There would also appear to be a tri-monthly paper Coq de France at Aix-en-Provence.

F. Membership

No reliable data on membership are as yet obtainable.

A Berlin (Transocean) broadcast 2 July 1943 reported that a Congress of the Francist party had been recently attended by 2,000 delegates from all parts of France.[1]

1. Confidential reports as of November 1942 would show that the Francistes were increasingly active in Côte d'Or, but lacked resources; that in the Nord a Franciste meeting had been attended by twenty people.

III. RASSEMBLEMENT NATIONAL POPULAIRE

A. Origin

Founded on 1 February 1941 as a countermove to the foundation in Vichy on 27 January 1941 of the Rassemblement National.

The beginnings of the RNP were seemingly brilliant and on 1 May 1941 Jean Goy announced that the membership of RNP had reached 350,000. On 16 June 1941 the membership was reported to number more than half a million.

On 10 October 1941, however, it was announced that the Mouvement Social Révolutionnaire headed by Deloncle, had broken away from the RNP on account of a "considerable difference in methods and conceptions as regards home policy."

In 1942 Marcet Déat centered his efforts round the formation of a French Single Party for the furtherance of the New Order in France.

B. Leaders

Among the founders of the new party were:

Marcel Déat, director of the newspaper L'Oeuvre.
Jean Luchaire, director of Les Nouveaux Temps.
Georges Suarez, director of Aujourd'hui.
Eugène Deloncle, leader of the Mouvement Social Révolutionnaire.
Georges Rivollet, former Minister of Pensions in the Doumergue and Flandin Cabinets
Jean Goy, president of the Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants
M. Sinac, member of the Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants
Adrien Marquet, Mayor of Bordeaux
Pierre Cathala, now Minister of Finance in Vichy
Guiraud, of the former Confédération Générale du Travail
Roy, of the Confédération Générale du Travail
Gaston Allemane, former deputy
Charles Spinasse, former deputy, editor of the Lyon newspaper Effort and later of the Paris Le rouge et le bleu
René Château, former deputy
Jean Michel Renaitour, former deputy
Gabriel Lafaye, former deputy
Rene Besset, former deputy
Montagnon, director of the Secours National
Georges Prade, of the Paris Municipal Council

Maurice Levillain, of the Paris Municipal Council
de Pressac, of the Paris Municipal Council
Jean Fonteney, of the Mouvement Social Révolutionnaire

C. Organization

President of the Party: Marcel Deat
Vice President: Jean Goy

The Central Council of 50 militant members meets every month.
The Permanent Commission meets every week.
The National Council called at irregular intervals includes the most responsible personalities of the movement both in the central and local organizations.

Secretariat General: Georges Albertini
Private Secretary of Deat: R. Benedetti
Service de Renseignement et de Securité: Maurice Levillain, chief of the Paris region
Propaganda services: Jacques Guionet
School for Party orators: Michel Brille
Editor of RNP Information: Georges Albertini
Service de documentation: Paul Montagnon and Robert Suel
Comité techniques (Intellectuals and technicians): Lety-Courbière
Centre Social Franco-Européen (economic and social collaboration between France and Germany): Sizaire

The chief of the territorial organization is Jean Goy and the General Manager one Boulard, in charge of personnel, effectives, and stores. Regional and principal inspectors are the intermediaries between the provincial elements and the headquarters.

The most important region is Paris, under Maurice Levillain and Pierre Jaureguiberry. It includes Paris, Seine et Oise, Seine et Marne. Each Paris arrondissement and each suburban commune is under a chef de section.

D. Subsidiary organizations

The RNP has the following subsidiary organizations:

the Légion Nationale Populaire
the Jeunesses Nationales Populaires
the Front Social du Travail
the Front National Révolutionnaire

1. Légion National Populaire

The LNP is the advanced guard of the party for its defense, under the leadership of Paul Montagnon.

The General Staff of the Légion includes nine Inspectors-General, three members of the Comité Central, and the President of the Comité de securité.

The Légion includes brigades, each made of 3 groups; groups include 3 battalions; battalions include 3 sections, and sections include 3 platoons.

There are several brigades, the Paris region along numbering 6, or 54 battalions and 162 sections.

There are also several special service sections:

Several Sections d'action rapide (SAR)
Ten Sections de prévention
Ten Sections de protection
Several Sections de Recherches et Renseignements
and the Service des Interventions différées.

2. Jeunesses Nationales Populaires

The JNP is the RNP youth movement, under Roland Silly. Other officials include Michel Courage and Rodolphe Sabatier. It publishes a weekly newspaper, Essor.

3. Front Social du Travail

The FST is a labor movement.

Secretary-Generals: Maurice Collombier-Lacombe
and Francis Desphelippon
Secretary for propaganda: René Eloy
Secretary for social service: Pelisson
Secretary for agricultural problems: de Robert

4. Front Révolutionnaire National and Militia

The Front National Revolutionnaire started as a Comité d'organisation du parti unique and as the most recent offspring of the RNP.

In March 1943, under the chairmanship of Pichard du

Page, a National Révolutionary Militia was formed, seemingly as a part of the Front Révolutionnaire. In April 1943 the militia paraded in mass meetings at Paris. Deat proclaimed its three goals:

to build up a vigilant organization against any Soviet or democratic rebellion;
to help in air raids,
to support the political objectives of the Front Révolutionnaire National.

If the Vichy government should move to Paris, this special militia would immediately join the official French militia. The RNP militia membership as of April 1943 was put at 6,000 men. (Transocean 3rd April).

IV. LEGION DES COMBATTANTS

A. Origin

The Legion was founded by a law of 29 August 1940 in an attempt to liquidate the political factions which still existed among pre-war associations of ex-servicemen.

Membership was open to all holders of the Carte du Combattant, and later even to non ex-servicemen when sponsored by two Legion members.

B. Leaders

The President of the Legion and its supreme head is Marshal Pétain. But since the reforms of June 1942, which followed the return of Pierre Laval, the Legion was placed under the control of the Head of the government, that is to say, of Pierre Laval himself.

The present Director-General of the Legion is Raymond Lachal, who succeeded Francois Valentin in June 1942.

The assistant Director-General is André Gervais. Both Lachal and Gervais were appointed by the Marshal. René Jalenques is General Secretary of the Legion.

C. Organization

The Comité de Direction of the Legion includes nine Comissaires Légionnaires.

Commissaire aux provinces: Raymond Lachal
Commissaire a l'Empire et a l'Etranger: André Gervais
Commissaire a la Jeunesse: Pierre Chevalier
Commissaire a la Propagande: Pierre Brassie
Commissaire a l'Action Sociale: Georges Pineau
Commissaire a l'Action Civique: Andre Courtial
Commissaire aux Prisonniers: Andre Gervais
Commissaire a l'Administration: René Jalenques
Commissaire au SOL (Service d'Ordre Legionnaire): Joseph Darnand

Three Commissions d'etudes techniques include:

La Commission d'études civiques
La Commission d'etudes sociales
La Commission d'administration

1. Before the schism with the SOL (Service d'Ordre Légionnaire). See below, under SOL.

The regional network of the Legion spreads to the smallest communes. The Legion includes regional delegates for all administrative regions, departmental presidents for departmental federations. Before the schism with the SOL, the departmental president had under his orders the departmental chief of the SOL.

D. Subsidiary Organizations

Attached to the Legion itself are the Jeune Legion, the Groupes Legionnaires d'Entreprise, and the Services Medicaux et Sociaux.

The Jeune Legion includes youths between the ages of 16 and 21, under the leadership of P. Chevalier, assisted by R. Rabouin and J. Ousset.

E. Press

1. Le Legionnaire, a monthly paper.
2. La Legion, monthly illustrated revue.
3. Bulletin de la Legion, bi-monthly.
4. Almanach de la Legion (every year).

F. Membership

The Legion has been said to have well over one million members, not including the colonies now under Allied control.

Before Laval's return to power, the Legion, strengthened by the then new SOL, represented an important factor in Vichy politics. Its ranks included men from political parties of every color.

V. SERVICE D'ORDRE LEGIONNAIRE (SOL) (or MILICE FRANCAISE)

A. Origin

Formerly the para-military formation of the Legion, the SOL broke away from the latter in January 1943.

Founded in January 1942 in the Alpes Maritimes by Darnand, Legion president of the federation of Alpes Maritimes, the SOL was later extended to Savoie, Rhône, and Bouches-du-Rhone.

The growth of SOL from a departmental militia restricted to Alpes-Maritimes to a national militia with headquarters in each department is chiefly due to the influence of Jacques Doriot's PPF.

In November 1942, following the Allied landing in North Africa, Joseph Darnand founded the African Phalanx, largely composed of SOL members.

On 6 November 1943 the SOL split away from the Légion des Combattants to place itself under the command of Laval as a separate unit.

It became the Milice Française, under the control of the Ministry of Interior (Laval), who delegated the leadership to Darnand.

B. Organization

On the para-military plane, the unit of the SOL is the main, consisting of four men and a leader, the chef de main.

Two mains compose a dizaine under a chef de dizaine. Above the dizaine is the trentaine. Three trentaines compose a centaine under the chef de centaine. Three centaines compose one cohorte under a chef de cohorte.

Several cohortes make a centre under a chef de centre.

Attached to the movement there used to be several schools. Following the abolition of the youth camps, the training school of the latter at Uriage (near Grenoble, Isère) was given to the Militia. (Pariser Zeitung, 23 March 1943).

C. Membership

Enrolled members are subject to a three months' probationary course including "political theory", "civics", and physical training. At the end of any three months, if the number of proposed members in any given department reaches 2,000 the "investiture" of the new SOL

members is held. This investiture included a vigil, usually round the War Memorial, followed the next day by the swearing of the SOL oath:

"I pledge myself on my honour to serve the Chief of the Legion, to devote all my efforts to the triumph of the National Revolution and its ideal, according to the orders given by my chiefs and the freely accepted discipline of the SOL."

SOL members are reputed to have motorized sections, with motorcyclists and lorries, armed with tommy-guns. Since their status is now official, it is obvious that they will be armed much as the police.

According to Transocean (5 July 1943), Darnand's militia in southern France numbers more than 30,000 members. The same membership had been already mentioned by the Gazette de Lausanne as of 23 January 1943. It was reported later that a part of the militia was sent to Tunisia before the full occupation of North Africa, and even to Corsica (Berlin-Transocean, 9 April 1943).

VI. THE PEASANT CORPORATION

An agricultural corporation, known as the Corporation Nationale Paysanne, was established by a law of 12 December 1940. According to that law, there were to be local and regional farmers' unions, and over them, a National Corporative Council, which also represented the specialized associations, such as the Association of Wheat-growers.

A new law modifying and completing that of 12 December 1940 was published on 9 December 1942. At that time it was reported that 33,000 local and 82 regional unions had been set up.

The Chairman of the Commission de l'Organisation Corporative Paysanne is reported to be Herve de Guebriant, also a member of the National Council at Vichy, and the President of the Union of Agricultural Syndicates of the Finistère and Côtes du Nord (in Brittany).

Under de Guebriant were, as of the beginning of 1942, seven general delegates: MM. de Blois, Groussault, du Fretay, Gault, Patier, Moreau de Vignemont, and Dorgeres.

These delegates could be identified with the most reactionary rural elements in pre-war France. Dorgeres was the head of an ultra-fascist Front Paysan which bitterly fought the Popular Front legislation. Du Fretay and Groussault were openly fascist.

Below these delegates were 27 members representing regional farmers' unions or syndicates, associations for the protection of certain crops, such as tobacco, wheat, wine, etc.

Most of the parties, described in sections I-V above have special bodies in charge of propaganda among farmers. There are obvious ties between the leaders of those parties and the leaders of the Peasant Corporation but the Peasant Corporation probably does not act as such for the military protection of the Vichy government.

Recently it has been reported that farmers had organized against agricultural sabotage allegedly carried on by subversive elements; it is quite possible that this is directed by regional or local farmers' unions, or that at least general directives originate with these unions.

VII. CENTRE PAYSAN

There is no pertinent information available with respect to the Centre Paysan.